

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BANGKO 16562 241352Z

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 USIE-00 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04

RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 ACDA-19 IO-14 AID-20 IGA-02

EB-11 NIC-01 SNM-02 DEAE-00 CU-04 OPR-02 /152 W

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC RMEDIATE NIACT 7653

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 16562

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS : PGOV, TH

SUBJECT : BRIEFING NIX SUB-COMMITTEE ON THAILAND

REF: STATE 209110

1. FOLLONG IS IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS POSED IN THE LETTERED
PARAGRAPHS OF REFTEL.

A. THE USG HAS SUPPLIED EQUIPMENT TO RTG SECURITY FORCES,
BOTH MILITARY AND POLICE; HOWEVER, THE RTG HAS PROCURED SIMILAR
EQUIPMENT ITSELF SO IT IS DIFFICULT TO DEFINE WHETHER THE
ACTUAL EQUIPMENT USED CAME FROM USG-FINANCED SOURCES. IT
IS POSSIBLE THAT SOME DID. HOWEVER, IN THIS CONNECTION SEE
SEPARATE AIDAC. THE PUBLIC SAFETY PROGRAM IS DESIGNED TO ENABLE
THE POLICE, PARTICULARLY IN BORDER AREAS, TO MEET THE COMMUNIST
THREAT, PRINCIPALLY AS EXPRESSED THROUGH THE INSURGENCY. THE
PROGRAM ALSO CONCENTRATES ON NARCOTICS SUPPRESSION. THE PROGRAM
ADDITIONALLY TAKES INTO ACCOUNT THE POSSIBILITY OF COMMUNIST-
INSPIRED RIOTS IN URBAN AREAS, AND AID HAS GIVEN LIMITED
ASSISTANCE TO THE METROPOLITAN POLICE. SUPPRESSION OF LEGITIMATE
DISSENT AND PROTEST IS NOT AN OBJECTIVE OF PUBLIC SAFETY PROGRAMS
ALTHOUGH INTERNAL SECURITY IS. THE ISSUE OF WHO PROVIDES THE
POLICE WITH ARMS IS IRREVELANT SINCE, HOWEVER IT IS ACCOMPLISHED,
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PAGE 02 BANGKO 16562 241352Z

THAILAND

LIKE OTHER COUNTRIES WILL FIND A WAY TO ARM ITS POLICE FORCE. EQUIPMENT IS PROVIDED UNDER RTG-USG AGREEMENTS FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROTECTING THAI NATIONAL SECURITY AND THE PROTECTION OF THAI CITIZENS FROM LAWLESSNESS. IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS, THAI OFFICIALS MAKE THE DECISIONS ON THE WAY THE SOVEREIGN NATION OF THAILAND USES SUCH EQUIPMENT. WE ARE NOT AWARE OF ANY RTG VIOLATIONS IN CONNECTION WITH OUR AID AGREEMENTS.

B. EMBASSY OFFICERS SPOKE WITH A NUMBER OF OFFICIALS DURING THE WEEK PRECEDING THE DOWNFALL OF THE THANOM GOVERNMENT, AND PRAISED THE RESTRAINT THAT BOTH SIDES SHOWED THROUGH OCTOBER 12. WHEN EVENTS REACHED THEIR CLIMAX ON OCTOBER 13-14, THERE WAS NO OPPORTUNITY TO REACH, OR TO DISCUSS THE SITUATION WITH, ANY RESPONSIBLE LEADERS. THE AMBASSADOR SPOKE WITH JUDGE SANYA THE DAY AFTER HIS APPOINTMENT AS PRIME MINISTER, SUPPORTED HIS STAND ON RESTORING ORDER, AND OFFERED THE PRIME MINISTER ANY PERSONAL HELP. IN TALKS WITH MARSHAL DAWEE AND GENERAL KRIT HE COMMENDED MODERATION SHOWN BY SECURITY FORCES WHICH STAYED OUT OF SHOOTING AND URGED MILITARY SUPPORT FOR THE NEW GOVERNMENT. IN GENERAL WE HAVE DEPLORED VIOLENCE BUT EXPRESSED HOPE THAT NEW GOVERNMENT CAN ADDRESS SOME OF THAILAND'S PROBLEMS, LONG IN NEED OF SOLUTION.

C. THE RTG HOPES TO COMPLETE THE NEW CONSTITUTION IN THREE MONTHS IN ORDER TO ALLOW TIME FOR THE APPOINTED NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY TO APPROVE IT. THIS TIMETABLE WOULD ENABLE THE GOVERNMENT TO FULFILL ITS PROMISE TO PROMULGATE A CONSTITUTION WITHIN SIX MONTHS. THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE IS CHAIRMAN OF THE DRAFTING COMMITTEE; THE METHOD OF STUDENT OR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION HAS NOT YET BEEN CLARIFIED, BUT INDICATIONS ARE THAT THE COMMITTEE WILL BE OPEN TO OUTSIDE IDEAS.

D. THE COMMUNISTS COULD EXPLOIT THE SITUATION, BUT WE BELIEVE THEY WILL BE CIRCUMSPECT SO AS NOT TO REVEAL THEIR HAND. THEY MAY WELL WORK THROUGH THE MORE RADICAL STUDENT AND LABOR GROUPS TO KEEP THE PRESSURE ON THE SANYA GOVERNMENT. IT IS TOO EARLY TO ASSESS THE EFFECT ON THE INSURGENCY.

E. NONE THAT WE CAN NOW DETERMINE.
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 BANGKO 16562 241352Z

F. THANOM, PRAPHAT, AND NARONG WOULD APPEAR TO BE POLITICALLY FINISHED. PRAPHAT AND NARONG MAY GO TO SWITZERLAND. AT THIS JUNCTURE, ALL THREE (BUT PARTICULARLY PRAPHAT AND NARONG) WOULD FIND THEIR LIVES IN JEOPARDY IF THEY RETURNED TO THAILAND, AND AS MATTERS STAND NOW WOULD BE ALLOWED TO RETURN ONLY TO STAND TRIAL. GIVEN THE PRECEDENTS OF PRIDI PANOMYONG AND GEN. PHAO SIRIYANOND, NARONG CAN PROBABLY NEVER RETURN. PRAPHAT

WOULD BE AN UNLIKELY RETURNEE ALSO. THANOM, WHO BEARS LESS OPPROBRIUM THAN THE OTHER TWO, CONCEIVABLY COULD COME BACK AFTER A LENGTHY COOLING OFF PERIOD. LEGAL ACTIONS ARE BEING CONTEMPLATED, BUT NONE HAVE BEEN FORMALLY PRESENTED. THANOM'S PRESENCE IN THE U.S. COULD BE THE FOCUS OF DEMONSTRATIONS BY THAI STUDENTS RESIDENT THERE (BANGKOK 16449), AND IF THOSE DEVELOP, COULD CAUSE US SOME EMBARRASSMENT HERE.

G. TOO EARLY TO ASSESS.

H. THE RTG IS SCHEDULED TO MAKE A FOREIGN POLICY DECLARATION AT THE NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY MEETING ON OCTOBER 25 (SEPTEL).

IT WILL REPORTEDLY EMPHASIZE ACCORDING TO "BANGKOK POST", NATIONAL INTERESTS IN THE CONDUCT OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS INSTEAD OF "BENDING WITH THE FREE WORLD." UNATTRIBUTED SOURCES SAY THE RTG WILL BEFRIEND ALL COUNTRIES NOT HOSTILE TO THAILAND IRRESPECTIVE OF IDEOLOGY, OR OF POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC BACKGROUND. THAILAND, ACCORDING TO THE "POST" ARTICLE WILL ALSO KEEP ITS ACTIVE ROLE IN REGIONAL COOPERATION THROUGH EXISTING REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, AND WILL REAFFIRM ITS SUPPORT FOR THE ULTIMATE NEUTRALIZATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIA. NORTH VIETNAM AND MAINLAND CHINA ARE REPORTEDLY SUBJECT OF A SEPARATE STUDY NOT YET FORTHCOMING. THE DRV HAS APPLAUDED STUDENT ACTIONS IN "RIDDING" THE COUNTRY OF THE "THANOM-PRAPHAT CLIQUE;" BUT SAYS THAT THE ANTI-IMPERIALIST STRUGGLE OF THE THAI PEOPLE CONTINUES. THE PRC HAS BEEN MORE CAUTIOUS. WE FORESEE NO MAJOR FOREIGN POLICY CHANGES, NOR BOLD INITIATIVES, DURING THE SHORT LIFE PLANNED FOR THE SANYA GOVERNMENT.

I. WE HAVE NO EVIDENCE OF SUBSTANCE TO PRAMUAN'S CHARGES THAT NARONG AND PRAPHAT WERE INVOLVED IN NARCOTIC TRAFFICKING
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PAGE 04 BANGKO 16562 241352Z

(SEPTEL), ALTHOUGH DEPT. HAS FULL REPORTING ON PRAMUAN'S OWN INVOLVEMENT.

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